

a.) Amendment to the Claims:

Claims 1-36 (Cancelled)

37. (Currently Amended) A method for protecting liver function from damage from excessive intake of alcohol, or for improving liver function impaired from intake of alcohol, which comprises administering, to a human in need thereof, an effective amount of an extract obtained by a process which comprises (1) extracting a plant of *Hydrangea macrophylla* Seringe var. *Thunbergii* Makino or *Hydrangea Dulcis* Folium with an aqueous medium and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate and obtain an extract residue, and (2) extracting the extract residue with ~~alcohol~~ ethanol or water containing ~~alcohol~~ ethanol to obtain an extract with said liver function protection or improving ability.

Claims 38-42 (Cancelled)

43. (Currently Amended) A method for protecting liver function from damage from excessive intake of alcohol, or for improving liver function impaired from intake of alcohol, in an animal, which comprises administering, to an animal in need thereof, an effective amount of an extract obtained by a process which comprises (1) extracting a plant of the genus *Hydrangea* *macrophylla* Seringe var. *Thunbergii* Makino or

Hydrangea Dulcis Folium with an aqueous medium and filtering the resulting extract to remove the filtrate and obtain an extract residue, and (2) extracting the extract residue with ~~alcohol~~ ethanol or water containing ~~alcohol~~ ethanol to obtain said extract, said extract having said liver function protection or improving ability.

44. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 43, wherein the animal is a human.

Claims 45-58 (Cancelled)